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ABSTRACT

The School Improvement Process introduced by this Personalized Activity Kit (PAK) is designed specifically to help solve educational problems and to improve the quality of educational experiences provided for the learner through comprehensive planning and managed change. It is based on the scientific problem-solving method. The five stages of the process are school-community involvement, student needs identification, program development/modification, program management, and program evaluation. A checklist for determining the quality of the planning process and the action plan is included. Appendixes contain guidelines for workshop facilitators and an outline of workshop activities for guidance if this PAK is used in a group. (Author/IRT)

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A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS KIT

PAK #1.0 - OVERVIEW

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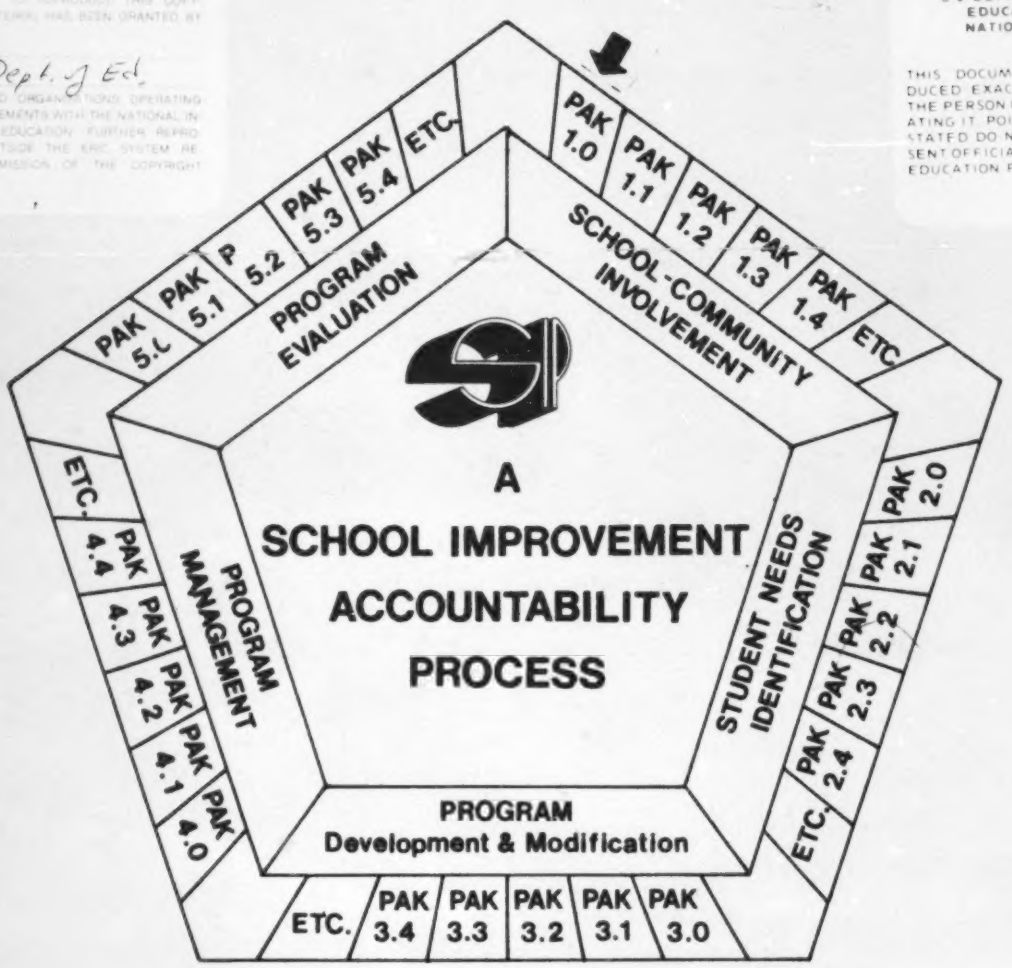

Personalized Activity Kit (PAK) for use as:

- Individualized Study Guide
- Small Group Study Guide
- Workshop Facilitator's Guide

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT - ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS KIT

PAK #1.0 - OVERVIEW

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Denver, Colorado
July 1975

This PAK was written in 1973 by members of the District Planning and Accountability Services Unit.

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DIRECTIONS FOR THE USE OF THE PAK

Each PAK is designed to be used in three alternative ways: 1) an individual user can work through the packet on his own; 2) a small group may work co-operatively; or, 3) a group of participants may be involved in a workshop situation under the leadership of a facilitator. Experience indicates that the latter is the most desirable situation. While an individual may work through the materials on his own, he misses those shared experiences which come as learners interact in a group situation.

PLEASE NOTE

Because this PAK will be used by many people in your district, please mark only the worksheets supplied by your instructor. Do not mark the pages of this PAK. Sample transparencies and worksheets (for duplication) are included in Appendices A and B.

If you are using PAK materials in a group workshop situation, consult Appendix A for detailed instructions. The diagram on the cover page and diagrams for Appendix A may be used to make overhead transparencies.

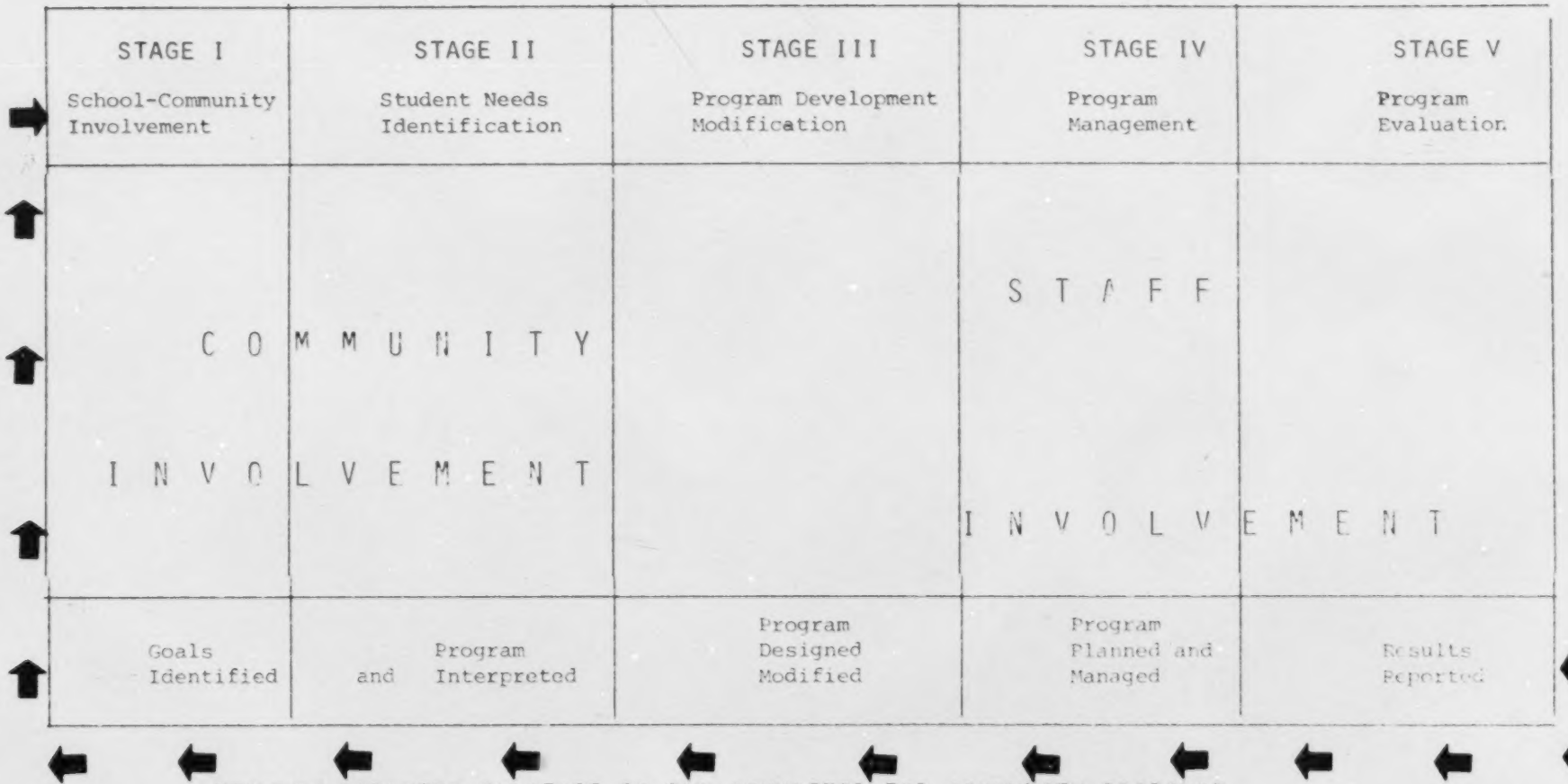
If you are working through the PAK individually, follow the general directions listed below:

- Read content of the PAK.
- Refer to Appendix A, page 2, for additional instructions.
- Do the exercises on worksheets copies from Appendix B. (when included)
- Read the bibliography (when included).

DEGREES OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Information Received from Community

Information Acted Upon by Staff



THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS - AN OVERVIEW

PAK 1.0

Purpose

The purpose of this Personalized Activity Kit (PAK) is to challenge the reader to consider the future and what the world will be like ten to twenty years from now. While it is important to focus on the educational needs of today's learners, it is also important to consider the future educational needs of learners who must be prepared to meet the unidentified problems of the twenty-first century. As James Reston states, "...This depends largely on whether they are being educated for the world that is going or the world that is coming...we find ourselves in a race with the pace of change.... The physical world is now changing faster than we can change ourselves."

When one considers the many changes we must adjust to, as well as dealing with the rapidity of these changes, the need for a systematic approach to constructive change becomes apparent. This PAK introduces the School Improvement Process as a concept for achieving quality education through comprehensive, long-range planning and the management of change to insure improvement. By using all of the PAK's in a sequence, the participant may assist a school district in developing action plans for improving its educational services. He may also gain for himself a significant understanding of the procedures involved.

Educating the Adults of the Twenty-first Century

This section emphasizes three key questions:

- What kind of adults do we want our young people to be?
- What kind of world do we anticipate they will live in as adults?
- What kind of education may be required to help them succeed in their world?

In determining our individual responses to these three questions, we need to consider several factors or trends which will surely influence our decisions. These are:

The impact of technology: *The rapidity of industrial change and improvements in technology have made it necessary to be retrained several times in our working years. This increase in job mobility has made us a nation on the move ... prompting the term "the temporary society."*

The impact of technology (cont'd)	*The by-products of an industrial society - pollution, sprawling, crowded cities, depletion of natural resources, organized crime - these require solutions. The demand is great for citizens who possess divergent thinking and problem-solving abilities.*
The impact of population:	*Increasing population density as well as population mobility will require improved skills in interpersonal communications, values clarification, and human relations.*
The increasing span of human life:	*Increasing length of life, coupled with earlier job retirement, may demand increased leisure time skills to assure optimal mental and physical health in advanced years, e.g., hobbies crafts, sports, art, music, reading, adult education courses.*
Unknown factors:	*No list of anticipated conditions may be complete, for in times of great flux and particularly within the context of a "temporary society," new, unpredicted problems and conditions will surely emerge. Today's learners as adults of the 21st century must possess a tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity in order to be adaptive to situations not yet known. And finally they will need to be able to think both caringly and critically, as well as cooperatively, in coping with their world of the 21st century.*

Answers to some present educational problems may be available, but it makes little sense to propose random solutions to those educational problems not yet encountered. What is needed, instead, is a process -- a series of procedures which will provide for systematic problem solving and decision-making. We need now to develop procedures to anticipate the continuing future educational needs of learners -- the skills, understandings, attitudes which might best fit them for personal intellectual growth and emotional fulfillment as adult human beings. Essentially, then, we are describing a systematic, long-range and comprehensive plan for school improvement.

The Scope and Purpose of the School Improvement Process

The five-step School Improvement Process is designed specifically to help solve educational problems and to improve the quality of educational experiences provided for the learner.

The five stages in the School Improvement Process are:

I. School-Community Involvement

II. Student Needs Identification

III. Program Development/Modification

IV. Program Management

V. Program Evaluation

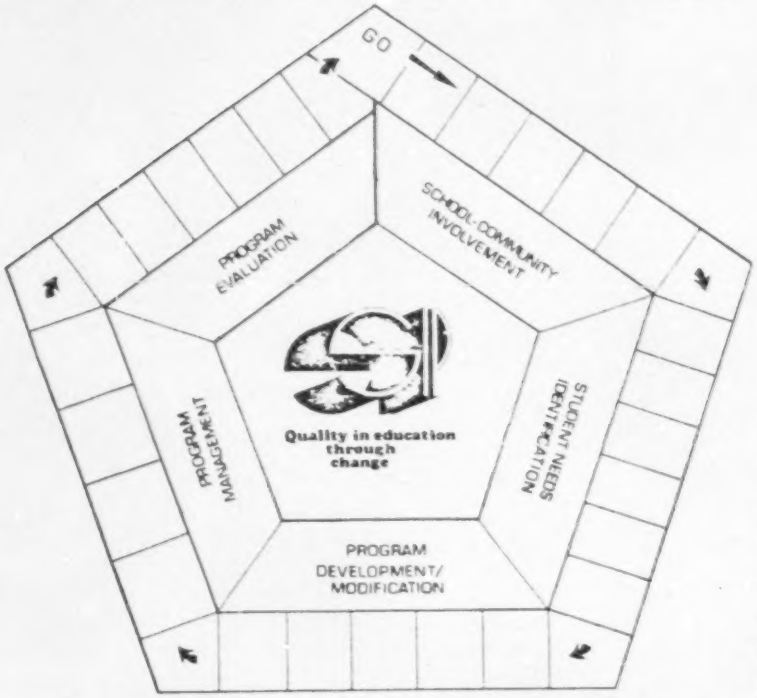
The School Improvement Process employs basic problem-solving methods. These methods are not new, although they have only recently been applied to educational problems. The diagrams on the following pages show the similarities of the School Improvement Process and other methods of problem-solving. Variations among them are largely the result of vocabulary differences and the sequencing of the sub-steps.

Problem-solving models based upon the scientific method use a process of iteration - checking back and forth between what is and what ought to be, what is required and what is feasible, to insure consistency.

"Analysis is not neat, logical, and sequential. Actual behavior in response to a problem situation is often confused, illogical, and disorderly. Furthermore, each problem-solver and each problem to be solved has its own individual characteristics. Diversity rather than uniformity is the rule in the attack on problem situations. We do not find the problem-solver going neatly and logically through the sequence of steps outlined above. Rather, he jumps around, often starting in the middle, returning then to the initial steps, moving back and forth between hypothesis, problem clarification, appraisal of implications, and hypothesis again. Some of the phases outlined may fail to appear, as when a hypothesis is put into action without previously thinking through what it means or implies." -- R.L.Thorndike, "How Children Learn" - N.S.S.E. 49th Yearbook, 1950.

Obtaining school improvement on the basis of a local district's commitment to comprehensive, continuous, long-range planning is a relatively new concept in education. The key to such improvement is the development and implementation of an action plan for better meeting the educational needs of students. Under the School Improvement Process, school improvement is accomplished by a partnership among students, the local board of education, the state board of education, the educators and other concerned citizens of the local community.

A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS



THE STAGES OF PLANNED CHANGE
(Discrepancy Systems Model by Ronald G. Havelock)

Stage I: Building a Relationship

Who is the client?...What is your relationship at the very beginning?...Inside or outside?...The ideal relationship...Danger Signals...How to size up your relationship

Stage II: Diagnosis: From Pains to Problems to Objectives

How do you make a good diagnosis?...How not to make a diagnosis: some pitfalls

Stage III: Acquiring Relevant Resources

Seven major purposes for resource acquisition: D-A-E-T-E-I-M...An acquisition strategy...Building a permanent capacity for resource acquisition

Stage IV: Choosing the Solution

Deriving implications from research...Generating a range of solution ideas...Feasibility testing... Adaptation

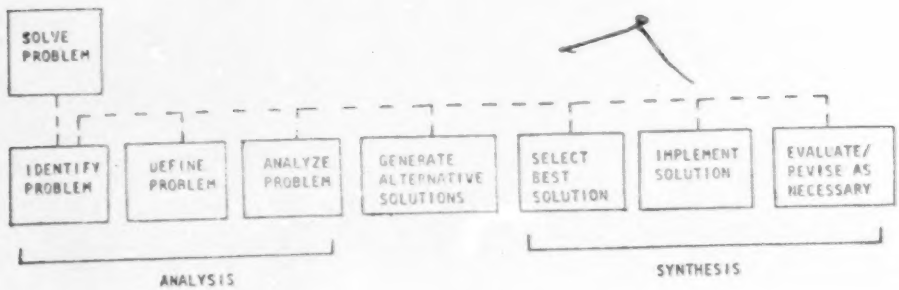
Stage V: Gaining Acceptance

How individuals accept innovations...How groups accept innovations...How to communicate...Keep your program flexible

Stage VI: Stabilizing the Innovation and Generating Self-Renewal

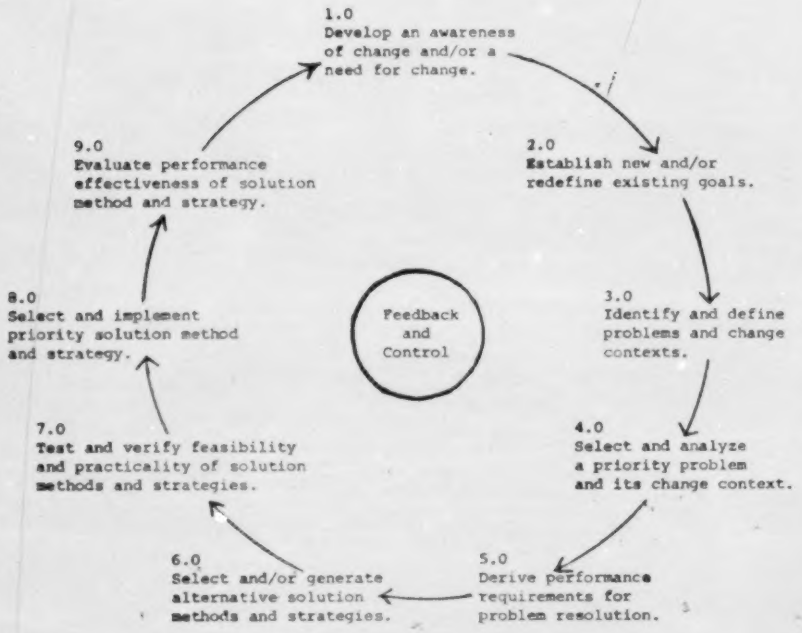
Insuring continuance...Creating a self-renewal capacity...Disengagement

SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD



PREPARING EDUCATIONAL PLANNERS (PEP)

(A Model of a System Approach to Problem-Solving)


1.0
Develop an awareness of change and/or a need for change.
2.0
Establish new and/or redefine existing goals.
3.0
Identify and define problems and change contexts.
4.0
Select and analyze a priority problem and its change context.
5.0
Derive performance requirements for problem resolution.
6.0
Select and/or generate alternative solution methods and strategies.
7.0
Test and verify feasibility and practicality of solution methods and strategies.
8.0
Select and implement priority solution method and strategy.
9.0
Evaluate performance effectiveness of solution method and strategy.
Feedback and Control

An examination of the model reveals that:

- the model is a "closed-loop" logic system.
- evaluation data "feeds-back" to every step to facilitate continuous revision and analysis of products.
- an iteration loop exists between each component of the system and every other component facilitating "check-back," feed-back, and verification procedures.

JOHN DEWEY
(How We Think, 1910)

1. A felt difficulty.
2. Identification and definition.
3. Suggestions for possible solutions.
4. Development by reasoning.
5. Further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; conclusion of belief or disbelief.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

DEFINE

Function 1
IDENTIFY PROBLEM
- o Assess Needs
- o Establish Priorities
- o State Problem

Function 2
ANALYZE SETTING
- o Audience
- o Conditions
- o Relevant Resources

Function 3
ORGANIZE MANAGEMENT
- o Tasks
- o Responsibilities
- o Timelines

DEVELOP

Function 4
IDENTIFY OBJECTIVES
- o Terminal
- o Enabling

Function 5
SPECIFY METHODS
- o Learning
- o Instruction
- o Media

Function 6
CONSTRUCT PROTOTYPES
- o Instructional Materials
- o Evaluation Materials

EVALUATE

Function 7
TEST PROTOTYPES
- o Conduct Tryouts
- o Collect Evaluation Data

Function 8
ANALYZE RESULTS
- o Objectives
- o Methods
- o Evaluation Techniques

Function 9
IMPLEMENT/RECYCLE
- o Review
- o Decide
- o Act

The School Improvement Process encourages local school districts to develop objectives uniquely suited to the educational needs of their students and then carry out a planned sequence of activities designed to attain those stated objectives. The focus is on opportunities of the future, not standards of the past. The emphasis is changed from measuring resources (inputs) to measuring results (outcomes), from meeting minimal standards to striving for locally-developed objectives that reflect the needs, aspirations, values, and capabilities of a particular district.

Better education through better planning is the central purpose of the School Improvement Process. Used properly, the process provides a way to:

1. Individualize school district goals and objectives by basing them on the particular needs of the students in the district.

2. Implement comprehensive, continuous, long-range planning by establishing specific staff responsibilities and district-wide procedures.

3. Make the best possible use of all available resources by better relating:

   a. the community to the school

   b. district policies to goals, objectives and student needs

   c. programs, practices, and services to district goals and student needs

   d. program planning and priority allocation of resources to district goals and student needs

   e. evaluation and modification of program to district goals and student needs

   f. decisions to cost/benefit and cost/effectiveness

While the American people are now more vitally interested in public education than ever before, they have given unmistakable warnings that school boards and educators must be increasingly mindful of the taxpayers' abilities to pay. Before the American people of any state or region will dig deeper into their pocketbooks for education, they want proof that the money they are spending is doing what it is supposed to do. They want to see a relationship between the money they put in, the time their children put in, the expertise that educators put in, and the results in terms of learner achievements. The School Improvement Process, effectively implemented, represents the best hope that educators have of being accountable. Demonstrated commitment to school improvement results in automatic accountability, but being accountable does <u>not</u> necessarily result in school improvement.

Those committed to school improvement and accountability recognize the importance for:

1. Clarifying educational goals within the local school-community.

2. Identifying and meeting educational needs of learners.

3. Communicating what the learner should do to meet those needs.

4. Communicating what the staff and administration should do to enable those learner needs to be met.

5. Identifying procedures, resources, and budget requirements that will work best to enable the individual learners to meet those needs.

6. Improving evaluation and reporting systems that measure individual learner progress and indicate the worth of the existing educational programs as they serve to meet the defined needs.

One comprehensive, systematic way of doing all of these things is to follow the stages of the School Improvement Process with its heavy reliance on school-community involvement in all stages.

Stage I: School-Community Involvement

Since the Sputnik Era of 1957, much rhetoric, energies, and money have been expended for educational change. One of the basic reasons why such change efforts have not been as productive as planners had hoped was the failure to incorporate into the change efforts the needs of people -- the needs of students, the needs of educators, and the needs of people in the local community.

The act of involving people in deciding what changes they want in their schools has many beneficial effects. There is commitment and support for that which is chosen over that which is mandated by someone else. When the act of deciding involves students, professional staff, and the general public, they have to think about the choices. They have to get together and reach a cooperative decision.

A broad base of community involvement is needed for effective educational planning. This means more than an occasional community meeting or open forum. It means getting the community involved in the work of developing an action plan. The technical details, the specific techniques and the neat appearance of the action plan are not nearly so important as the cooperation, support and enthusiasm of those involved in, and affected by, the planning. Such support will prove to be particularly helpful when budget requests are made to implement the plan, during bond issues, etc.

Stage II: Student Needs Identification

The identification of real educational needs involves gathering the educational concerns of many people, those in the community and those in the schools, staff and students. (Then these concerns must be sorted into separate solutions from learner needs.) These solutions should be put into a "bank" for later use.

Determining whether concerns are real or not is done by a procedure called a concerns analysis. If the facts regarding these concerns indicate that learner needs are not being met, then we have a validated learner need. On the other hand, if the facts tell us that learner needs are being met, we are faced with another kind of problem -- letting the public know.

Needs and goals are general in nature, expressing the broad expectations that people hold for their schools. By systematically identifying a valid learner need, a program can then be planned to meet this need.

Stage III: Program Development/Modification

Identified learner needs can be resolved by appropriate program development or by modification of existing program(s). This involves the writing of learner, staff and program objectives. Then the solutions "bank" is listed and any further alternative solutions are generated and added to this list.

Each alternative must then be systematically evaluated and the best one chosen using a predetermined set of standards (criteria). Once a solution is chosen and described, activities, materials, and equipment should be selected which will insure the success of the program. Staff, finances, and other resources must be allocated. When all of these steps have been taken, a planned program is ready for implementation.

Stage IV: Program Management

Program management includes those processes designed to implement the program in a consistent and sequential manner, with due attention to target dates and other deadlines. Since measurable objectives were written earlier during the planning stage, it is possible to monitor progress toward reaching those objectives. Management-by-objectives provides for early identification of implementation problems, for immediate modification and for staff growth and development.

Stage V: Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, and disseminating information that indicates the extent to which objectives have been met. Evaluation may also be viewed as a means for determining the extent

to which planned results and actual results coincide. Each stated objective is an evaluation checkpoint for determining progress toward reaching that outcome. Checking for the accomplishment of short-term and long-term objectives results in a system of continuous evaluation. Such continuous evaluation provides the feedback necessary for making adjustments in the program in order to reach the objectives and resolve the learner needs.

Evaluation is a continuous process, never really reaching completion. There are always "new concerns" from the school-community requiring a judgment regarding whether new needs exist, as well as requiring fresh determination of whether previous needs have been met. And so the cycle is repeated, resulting hopefully in a continuing process of school improvement.

SUMMARY

PAK 1.0

The School Improvement Process is designed specifically to help solve educational problems and to improve the quality of educational experiences provided for the learner through comprehensive planning and managed change. It is soundly based on the scientific problem-solving method.

The five stages of the School Improvement Process are:

1. School-Community Involvement
2. Student Needs Identification
3. Program Development/Modification
4. Program Management
5. Program Evaluation

A checklist for determining the quality of the planning process and the action plan is included.

APPENDIX A

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE FOR GROUPS

Each PAK has been organized around a fundamental and widely recognized generalization of how people learn. Learning occurs more efficiently when an overview is presented first. Succeeding learning experiences then take the person deeper into each concept adding more specific details. There may be several levels of exposure until real expertise is developed.

Workshop Specifications

I.	Time Required:	Two hours
II.	Facilities:	One room for each 24 participants. Participants to be seated at tables (maximum of six per table). Rooms should provide adequate accoustics and physical comfort suitable for a workshop session.
III.	Equipment & Material Needs:	One overhead projector and viewing screen per room
		Power extension cord (1 per room)
		Transparency sheets
		Grease pencils
		Butcher paper
		Masking tape
		Chalkboard, chalk, eraser
		Name tags (if necessary)

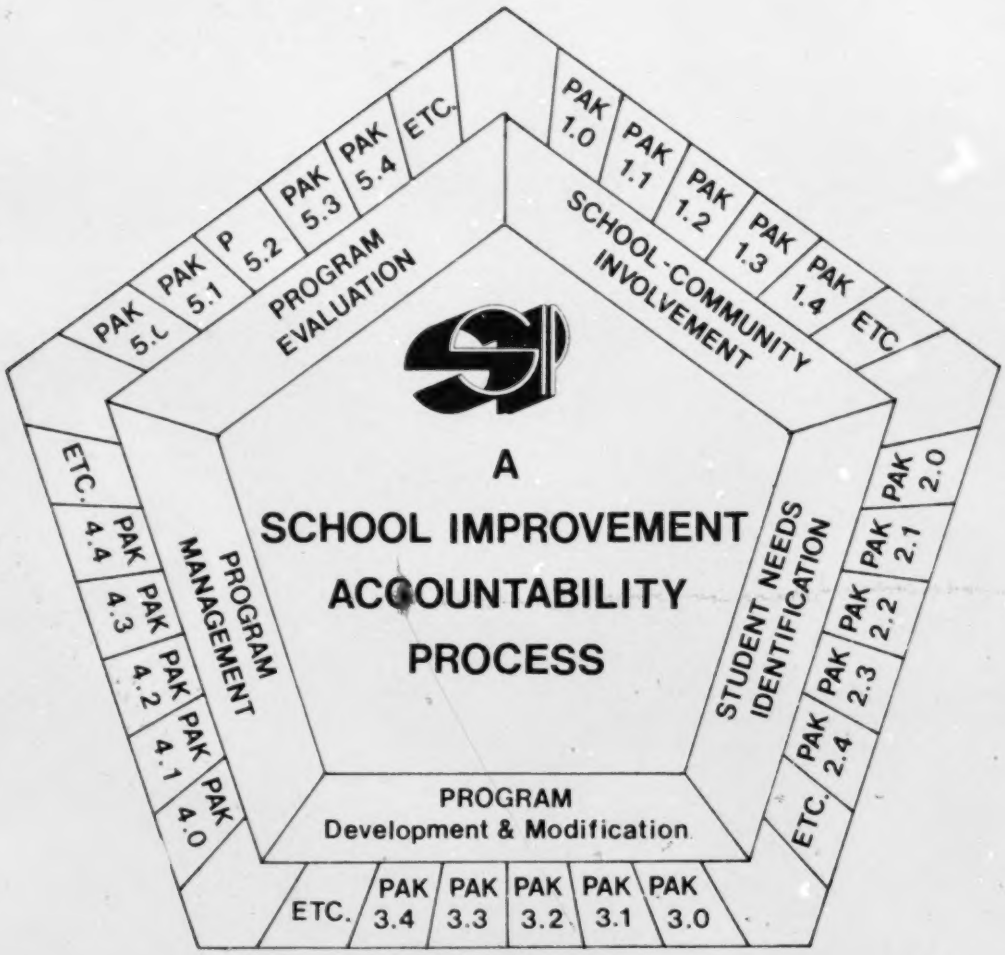
Workshop Activities - PAK 1.0

The following sequence of activities is suggested and may be modified at your discretion.

1.	30 min.	Have participants read materials on pages 1 through 11.
2.	30 min.	In small groups share reactions.
3.	45 min.	Conduct a question and answer session with large group.
4.	15 min.	Call attention to the Summary on page 12. Remind participants to complete the PAK critique form and turn it in to you.

NOTE: As quickly as possible, review the critique forms for feedback information that may be helpful during other workshops.

Total time: Approximately 2 hours


A
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
ACCOUNTABILITY
PROCESS
PROGRAM
Development & Modification
PROGRAM
EVALUATION
SCHOOL-COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT
STUDENT NEEDS
IDENTIFICATION
PROGRAM
MANAGEMENT
PAK 1.0
PAK 1.1
PAK 1.2
PAK 1.3
PAK 1.4
ETC.
PAK 2.0
PAK 2.1
PAK 2.2
PAK 2.3
PAK 2.4
ETC.
PAK 3.0
PAK 3.1
PAK 3.2
PAK 3.3
PAK 3.4
ETC.
PAK 4.0
PAK 4.1
PAK 4.2
PAK 4.3
PAK 4.4
ETC.
PAK 5.0
PAK 5.1
P 5.2
PAK 5.3
PAK 5.4
ETC.

PAK #
(Please fill in number)

PAK CRITIQUE FORM

Please give your assessment and comments on the following:

PROGRAM ELEMENT	OUT-STANDING	VERY GOOD	FAIR	POOR	VERY POOR	COMMENTS
1. The quality & relevance of the subject matter.						
2. The appropriateness and usefulness of the instructional materials.						
3. The timing or sequencing of the various items presented.						
4. The directing and assistance given on the exercise.						

Other comments or suggestions for improving this PAK:

If this PAK was used as part of a WORKSHOP training session, then please also complete the following:

PROGRAM ELEMENT	OUT-STANDING	VERY GOOD	FAIR	POOR	VERY POOR	COMMENTS
5. The deployment, grouping or planned interaction of the participants.						
6. The productivity and/or usefulness of the individual work session(s).						
7. The comments or assistance given to you on your selected problem.						